1: Jenness--171
116, 755

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

"In most cases of sickness the diagnosis alone is considered sufficient to arrest the evil, especially if it is reinforced by an abstinence from such articles of food as the shaman may ordain. Even if it fails no discredit falls on the shaman, for the forces of evil are many and great, and his powers after all are limited."

1: Jenness--171 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 753, 755

"For the forerunners of death, accidents and sickness, the Eskimo knows of only one cause, the malignant activities of evil spirits or of the shades of the dead. Many of Higilak's seances in Victoria island were held for the purpose of propitiating or intimidating these shades and dispelling their influence. The natives have no knowledge whatever of medicine, and very little of surgery. A head-ache is sometimes cured by bleeding, broken limbs are set in splints and frozen members are amputated. Aksiatak, for example, dislocated his ankle while wrestling in the dance-house; he pulled it back into place, covered it with a long deerskin sock and laid three splints around it, one on each side and one at the back, keeping them firmly in place by means of a raw-hide lashing; a second cord running from his hand to the sole of his foot enabled him to raise his leg without bending it. A year later his son Nakitok fell from the roof and broke his thigh; the Eskimos set his leg in splints also. Both accidents were ascribed to the machinations of evil spirits and the shamans were asked to appease them. A painful swelling on the arm of the old shaman Ilatsiak was cured by lancing. For snow-blindness the natives use counter-irritants, flooding the eyes with the smoke of burning heather or of the Dryas integrifolia, or tying a louse to a thread and letting it scratch the sclerotis. Complaints that are considered magical in their origin, however, find their surest remedies in counter-magic, so a shaman is usually called in at once to diagnose the cause and prescribe a cure. In most cases he discovers that some taboo

has been broken, or that the patient has committed some action which offended a certain dead person's shade. The latter was the interpretation given to the illness of the Noahognik Eskimo Hitkok, who killed his dog in a fit of anger because it refused to follow him to the sealing ground; in this case the resentful shade was the dead relative after whom the dog was named.(1)"

"1. There was no conception of the dead man's soul residing in the dog; Hitkok had merely shown disrespect to him by killing his namesake."

1: Jenness--172-173 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 755

"Sometimes a friend will lend some of his vital force to drive away a disease. For example, if a man has stomach trouble, a comrade will often spit on his hand and rub the afflicted part, thereby instilling some of his own surplus strength to aid in the patient's recovery. (1) The calves of Avranna's legs were sore one day, and the natives asked me to rub them with my saliva. On another occasion Avranna bound my belt around his head to cure a headache; my vitality communicated itself to my belt, passed into his body and effected a cure. A charm too will often keep off an ailment. The bill of the yellow-billed loon (Gavia adamsi) will help to ward off snow blindness, so in the spring some of the natives wear them on their shoulders or carry them in their hands. An old hunter, Aiyallik, who had his thumb torn off by a brown bear, used [173] to wear it as a charm in a small skin bag suspended round his neck, but whether it was intended to give him good luck in general, or to ward off some specific danger or sickness, I did not discover."

"1. Cf. Rasmussen, p.145; Egede, p.198."

1: Jenness--173 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 755, 784

"A woman must abstain from sewing, and usually from fishing and hunting, whenever her husband or brother is ill. A shaman sometimes enjoins on her certain food restrictions as well. Thus Higilak was forbidden to eat either the liver or the kidney of a seal when her brother Tusayok was ill. In this particular instance the prohibition was suggested by her second name Taktu (Kidney). Sometimes the malady itself suggests it, as when Ikpakhuak was forbidden to eat the stomach of the caribou when he himself was suffering from stomach trouble."

1: Jenness--195-196 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 755

"It was stated that the shamans are public servants to some extent, comparable to our doctors. Whenever anything goes wrong--the weather is unusually stormy, or seals are scarce, or a number of people become ill -- the shaman are asked or themselves volunteer to discover the cause and remove the evil. I have already mentioned how in Bathurst inlet at the beginning of the sealing season they kill or drive away all the little spirits that live on the ice and would prevent the Eskimos from catching seals. In March 1915 Uloksak, who had just come from Coronation gulf, was asked by the Dolphin and Union strait natives to kill or drive away a certain evil spirit that was threatening to destroy them all; already, they said, one Puivlik and two Akulliakattak natives had died, and they feared that others might follow them. Uloksak's familiar, a [196] dog, drove the hostile spirit into a dance-house where the seance was taking place. One of the spectators -- for it was visible to the people -- said that it had the form of a human being, but was only about two feet high and had unusually long hair. Uloksak's familiar, though invisible, could be heard yelping inside the shaman's body. A long contest took place between the two spirits, but finally the dog drove the evil one outside the house and killed it in the snow. Thus the community was rid of its pest."

1: Jenness--196 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 755

"In the examples just given the shamans' services are employed for the benefit or otherwise of the whole community; but they can be used to serve individuals equally well. Thus when Ikpakhuak had a headache one evening, Higilak divined over him. She borrowed my coat (attigi), rolled it into a bundle, and fastened her belt-cord around it. Then she summoned a shade into the bundle and asked it various questions, judging of the answers by the weight of the coat, 'Yes' if it seemed heavy to lift and 'No' if it seemed light. After a series of questions and answers she discovered that a dead sister-in-law of Ikpakhuak had bewitched him, so she appeased the wrath of the shade with soothing words until it promised to cease its baneful influence. This ceremony took place in Ikpakhuak's tent where there was no one present save himself and his wife. Lying in my sleeping-bag in a tent adjoining I could hear her questioning the bundle, but no one else was aware that she even intended to hold a performance. It is hard to believe that Ikpakhuak, who had lived with his wife for years, could have been deliberately deceived by her unless she was deceived herself at the same time."

1: Jenness--213-214 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 755

"Avranna had a headache one day, and borrowed my belt to tie round his head. It drove the pain, he told us later, from the front to the back of his head, but did not dispel it altogether. Higilak then borrowed my coat to hold a divining performance and discover the cause of her son's malady. As usual she slipped her belt round it and enquired who was inside the bundle making it heavy. Through a number of questions she discovered that it was a kinsman of mine. Then she enquired who it was that was threatened with sickness and death, 'Was it Avranna?' 'No.' 'Tusayok?' 'No.' 'Ikpakhuak?' 'Yes.' 'From whom? From a white man?' 'No.' 'From someone near at hand?' 'No.' 'Someone afar off?' 'Yes.' 'The Prince Albert sound natives?' 'Yes.' 'How? Through the stone pot she had bought from them and was using for cooking fish?' 'No.' 'Was it through' (this question I could not understand). 'Yes', 'Who was causing it? Was it Nilgak?' 'No.' 'Kunana?' 'Yes.' Here was our answer then; Kunana tried to kill Ikpakhuak at Lake Tahiryuak by some kind of sorcery, but failed. A general conversation among the audience followed this statement, during which Higilak addressed a question now and then to the kila. The upshot was that Avranna's headache did not presage a fatal illness and he would soon be well again.

When Higilak came to borrow my coat for this performance I suggested that perhaps the kila might lie to her. She was not in the least offended or disconcerted, but argued quite logically that it had proved true on other occasions, for example when it pre-

dicted that we should meet with the natives from Prince Albert sound. Ikpakhuak was fishing all the time she divined, but she told him about it when he returned. During the performance itself an incident occurred that is well worth remarking. Higilak had announced that the kila was heavy, and she told Avranna, who was sitting beside her, to take hold of the cord and test it himself. He caught hold of the cord, but told her to take away her own hand, which she had kept on top of the bundle. I imagine that she was not expecting this sudden request, but she kept her countenance very well and removed her hand. Avranna then said, 'It's light,' the very opposite [214] to what she had stated. 'Take hold of it here,' she told him, fidgeting the bundle about a little, possibly to place it in such a position among the bed-skins that it would be less easy to lift. 'Now it's heavy, isn't it?' she asked, and he said 'Yes, it is a little.' 'Take hold of it here lower down,' she directed him again, 'It's heavy now, isn't it?' 'Well, just a little,' he replied. This appeared to satisfy her; she took the cord in her own hands again and weighed it. 'It is heavy', she said, and went on with her questioning. No one seemed to think that there might be any fraud on Higilak's part. Avranna's doubts related not to her good faith, but rather to her interpretation of the weight of the kila, just as we might sometimes question the accuracy of a doctor's diagnosis."

6: Roberts and Jenness--14 (1914-16) 1925 Copper Eskimo
116, 533, 755

"In this collection a few of the incantations slightly resemble dance-songs in form, having refrains and in one case a connective; but on the whole their pattern is quite different. Most of them were said to be very ancient and their meanings not understood. In No. 92 (93 and 94 are variants) the words are supposed to be uttered by the shaman's familiar, which is directly invoked in Nos. 95 (variants 96 and 101); 97 and 107 (variant 109). No. 88 seems to describe how the familiar forced the sick man's wandering soul to return to his body and so destroyed the cause of his ailment; and Nos. 100 (variant 104) and 105 (variant 106) depict the behaviour of the shaman himself and interpret the meaning of his performance. The words of the remaining songs throw no light on their purpose; as far as one can see they might have been equally well adapted to dance-tunes."

6: Roberts and Jenness--483 (1914-16) 1925 Copper Eskimo
116, 533, 755

"An incantation for healing the sick, sung by Haquŋγaq, a Puᵢvtᵢq woman
....

Translation

Verse 1. For thou madest me shiver with fear, for thou madest me shiver with fear,
For thou madest me shiver with fear, for thou madest me shiver with fear,
Me, thou didst make me shiver with fear.

Verse 2. (Same as Verse I)

Verse 3. ? it made me return home,
? it made me return home,
Me, thou didst make me shiver with fear.

Verse 4. When thou didst gaze on me, when thou didst gaze on me,
When thou didst gaze on me, when thou didst gaze on me,
Me, thou didst cast thine eyes on me."

bone, and seldom exceeded 4 inches in length. The teeth, which generally numbered from five to seven, were cut with the man's grooving tool, and a hole was nearly always drilled in the upper end for attaching the article to the needle-case. Most combs were simply cut off in a blunt point at the top, and though at times this shape was slightly modified, there was never any attempt at ornamental carving. Even the surface was rarely etched, and then only with two or three straight lines or with the ring-and-dot pattern. Typical specimens are shown in Figure 42.

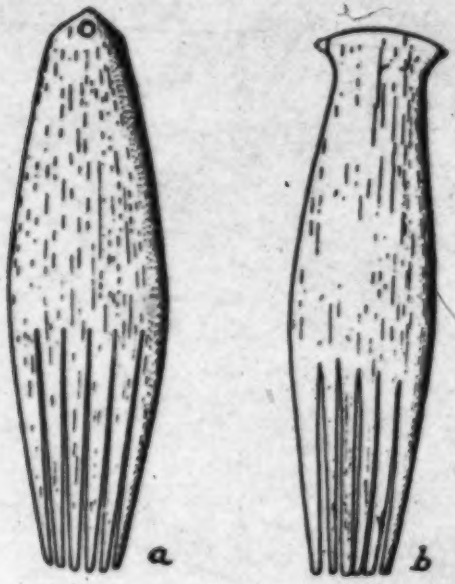

Figure 42. Women's combs. IV.D.1803, 886. 1/1.

Snow goggles (Figure 43), made of wood or antler, had the shape usual among all Eskimos. Projecting brow-pieces to intercept light from above were not uncommon. The cord was of sinew or sealskin. The slits were of even width, rarely widened at the inner end as in many goggles from Hudson Bay. Ornamentation was absent.[1]

Tattooing. The appearance of the women was greatly affected by tattooing. Only two men were seen with tattoo marks, which in both cases consisted of two short lines across the bridge of the nose. The marks on one man, a native from Coppermine River, had no significance that I could discover. He stated himself that they were due to an arbitrary whim, but I strongly suspect that

[1] See Plate VI in Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, pt. B, p. 768.

304 there was a magical reason at the back of it and that they were made to cure
755 some ailment. The other man was Ilatsiak, a shaman of Bathurst Inlet.[1] He asserted that a woman made the tattoo marks on his nose as he lay dead, in order to bring him back to life; that is to say, they were made in the course of a religious séance.

293

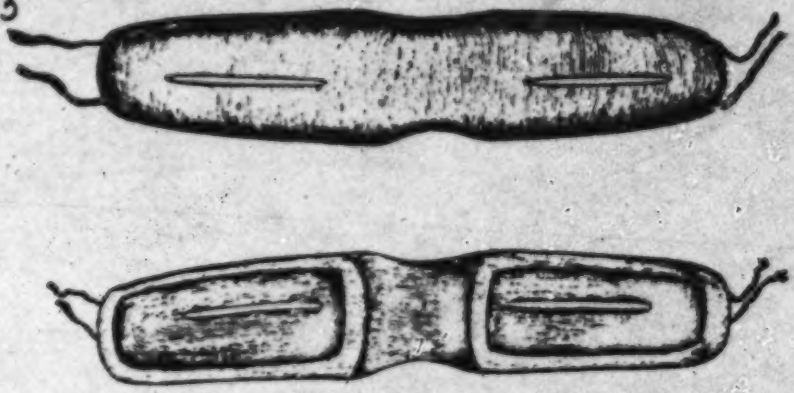

Figure 43. Snow goggles. IV.D.808. Approx. 1/1.

304 Tattooing on women had no religious significance; it was merely a time-honoured method of adornment to which every member of the sex submitted willingly. Face, hands, and arms were marked with certain stereotyped patterns, which were only slightly modified according to the whim of the individual. Usually the process was commenced a year or so before marriage and completed a year or two afterwards; but occasionally one encountered a young married woman with almost no tattooing, and a still younger maiden completely tattooed.

Figure 44. Women's face tattooing.

Just as there were no fixed rules regarding the exact time for the process, so there were no definite ceremonies surrounding it; the girl often made some of the lines herself on her hands and wrists, but generally they were made by a

[1] For an account of this same feat see "The Life of the Copper Eskimos", p. 96, vol. XII, Report of Canadian Arctic Expedition.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 54]

304 female friend or relative. There seemed to be no compulsion in the matter
[626] beyond public opinion and a woman's natural desire to follow the current methods of adornment. A young married woman in the Tree River group refused to allow her face to be tattooed at all on the ground that the process was too
[832] painful; but as she was only 17 years of age her aversion may have been overcome later. The average girl was rather eager to be tattooed in order to increase her charms.

The Copper Eskimo employed the process usual among other Eskimo tribes; they passed under the skin a copper sewing needle threaded with sinew dipped in lampblack. For dots, however, and sometimes also for lines, they did not thread the needle (but inserted into the puncture a sharp wooden stick dipped in lampblack. Only a few marks could be made at one time because the operation was very painful. Most girls began on the backs of the hands and on the forehead.

304 The designs consisted of series of parallel lines, zigzag and spur bands. On
531 the face the usual marks were double V's in the middle of the forehead, two or three connected "spurs" running from the corner of each eye, two parallel lines across each cheek, and five lines radiating from the lower lip to the chin (*See*
[177] Figure 44). Three parallel lines on each cheek instead of two, and from six to ten lines on the chin were seen on several women, nearly all of whom came from the eastern end of Coronation Gulf; doubtless, these unusual numbers were due to the influence of the Netsilik Eskimo farther east. On the arms the marks were usually confined to the outer surface (Figure 45); they seldom extended
• [755] above the elbow, or completely around the lower arm. Tattooing of the legs, after the manner of the eastern natives, was not practised, although a woman in Dolphin and Union Strait was said to have tattooed two small lines on her thigh to remove a painful swelling. A Prince Albert Sound woman had a short line tattooed on her left breast, for what reason I did not discover.

302 We neither saw nor heard of any painting of the face or body other than a few streaks made in jest with a piece of charcoal.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

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755 A little sickness was inevitable in the circumstances of their lives, and the medicine-men conjured in vain over one man who was slowly dying of a malady I myself could not diagnose. Several natives had coughs and colds, the result of changing from the outdoor life of summer to the seclusion of the winter hut. Ikpuck himself suffered from rheumatism, and borrowed my belt for a season that the vitality in my body might be transmitted to his own. Another invalid, the medicine-men said, was cured by Jumbo, my dog, who retrieved and restored his wandering soul. In gratitude they tied a band of soft white fur around the dog's neck to keep out the cold. Yet none of their ailments appeared serious except that of the dying man; and his had lasted too long to cloud the cheerfulness that pervaded the little community.

123 I revealed to the villagers my intention of travelling eastward, to visit some of their countrymen. They tried hard to dissuade me, asserting that the natives around the Coppermine River were so unfriendly toward white men that it would hardly be safe to venture among them. Of course, what concerned them was not my personal safety so much as the loss of trade through my absence, and the competition from the large body of eastern natives who would immediately flock to Bernard Harbour. They altered their tactics when they found that dissuasion was useless, and even heaped on me a number of petty commissions. One

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

of my companions seemed proof against every outrage, but my own rebelled. An insidious dysentery attacked me, making me at last so weak that I could hardly drag myself to the fishing-ground. My throat became dry like parchment, and drinking the clear water in the fishing-holes merely aggravated the dysentery without relieving the thirst. Altogether my predicament was rather alarming.

No parents could have been kinder to me at this time than were Ikpuck and Icehouse. Believing that all disease had a supernatural origin, Icehouse tried to exorcise the agencies responsible for my ill-health. That she failed to cure me distressed but did not surprise her, for, as she herself remarked, Eskimo remedies had no efficacy with white men. She showed her sympathy in a more practical manner by giving me the choicest morsels of fish, and by foraging far and wide for dryads in order to cook more frequently. Yet in spite of all her efforts my health failed to improve, and at last I sent The Runner to the Lake of Dancing to bring me a few ounces of malted milk and three pounds of dog-pemmican that I had stored there in a cache. The malted milk lasted me two days, after which I began on the pemmican, prepared forty years earlier for the fur posts of the Hudson's Bay Trading Company. It was brown with antiquity, and consisted merely of dried beef crushed to powder, with here and there fragments of bones; but mixed